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SUBJECT: IRAQ; THE AMIA CASE; SOUTH AMERICAN MILITARY FORCES;
AMBASSADOR WAYNE; 11/20/06; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend papers focus on the USG's possible shift on its strategy on Iraq; the AMIA case probe and its possible use by the USG to urge the UN Security Council to impose sanctions on Iran; Brazil's plans to unite South American military forces; and Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne's busy agenda in Buenos Aires.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "The US - Rice's turn to undo things"

Oscar Raul Cardoso, international columnist of leading "Clarín," writes (11/18) "... At least since some 20 months ago, one of Secretary Rice's closest aides, Philip D. Zelikow, has been drafting

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memorandums bearing little resemblance to the official view of White House and the US Department of State ..., including a text in which he warned that the occupation of Iraq could become a 'catastrophic failure.'

"... Therefore, one should consider the possibility that Washington will attempt to revive the peace process in the Middle East and that, as part of the new conditions, the US will try to leave the road of isolation and confrontation that Bush has maintained with Syria and Iran."

- "We have always been partners"

Jorge Elias, international columnist of daily-of-record "La Nación," writes (11/19) "... Two days before mid-term US (legislative) elections, the new US Ambassador, Earl Anthony Wayne, arrived in Argentina, the country with the largest anti-US sentiment index in the region since the time of Braden or Peron. By coincidence, the Kirchner administration happened to remove former assistant secretary Luis D'Elia due to his anti-US and anti-Israel

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statements...

"... the start of Wayne's mission also happened to coincide with court progress over the AMIA case against former Iranian authorities...

"As he presented his credentials, Wayne made it clear that no country or person has all the answers to the current challenges. He resorted to 'soft' power, that is, the ability to attract and convince other governments through culture, ideals and politics instead of subjecting them to gratuitous pressure.

"The US has a problem in Latin America - it is Venezuela's largest trading partner due to its oil purchases but, at the same time, it is the main target of Chavez's diatribes. The US discourse is somehow going against its own interests...

"A country's willingness to cooperate in the resolution of crucial issues not only depends on the US but also on the attraction it conveys on others. In an agitated sea, Wayne moved like a fish in water. He spoke little, but communicated a lot. He only omitted one issue, the FTAA, due to the crisis unleashed by the Fourth SOA...

"US Assistant Secretary for Western Hemispheric Affairs Thomas Shannon downplayed the counter-summit that was intended to irritate Bush. He never admitted to any disagreement with Kirchner, of hostile appearance but cordial approach. He also used 'soft power,' which is more profitable than 'hard power,' if one wants discourse to be in tune with action."

- "Argentina on maximum state of alert"

Joaquin Morales Sola, political columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," comments (11/19) "... The current tension between Argentina and Iran was inevitable. The Argentine Government ruled out breaking off ties with Iran, but it has not dismissed submitting the case to the UN Security Council in the event tension escalates.

"... Does this mean that Kirchner is distancing himself from Chavez and getting closer to Washington? Julio De Vido often says that the country has reached commercial deals with Chavez but that Argentina and Venezuela have different political objectives. Kirchner, in turn, has been indifferent to suspicion that the timing (of progress on the AMIA case) coincided with the case against Iran sponsored by the US and Europe.

"... According to Kirchner, 'the policy of my government does not differ from that of the US and Europe regarding international terrorism. In any case, the agreement existed prior to (the AMIA prosecutors' decision).'"

- "The US will make use of the AMIA case in its case against Iran"

Ana Baron, leading "Clarín's" Washington-based correspondent, comments (11/19) "The Argentine Judiciary will enter the world's political scene by the US hand and for US benefit. The Bush administration will use Argentine Judge Rodolfo Canicoba Coral's request for the arrest of former Iranian government officials to support its own search for international support to impose sanctions on Tehran if it decides to expand its nuclear program.

"... The White House and US Department of State's reaction to the announcement of Canicoba Corral's decision could not have been more positive. They not only praised the Argentine courts but also pledged cooperation for Argentine and Interpol authorities to arrest those accused. During a meeting at the Argentine Embassy last week, National Security Adviser Dan Fisk repeated his support for Argentine Ambassador Jose Octavio Bordon. So did Ambassador Earl Wayne with FM Jorge Taiana last Friday."

- "Kirchner, twists and outbursts"

Eduardo van der Kooy, political columnist at the leading Clarín, writes (11/19) "Luis D'Elia's resignation and the progress made on the AMIA case served President Kirchner to redirect his ties with Washington, and also with Hugo Chavez, although in a different direction.

"... Never before during his term in office has Kirchner received such praise from the White House and the Department of State. This flattery has reportedly started to bother him.

"... The new US Ambassador Earl Wayne did not make any serious political objection to the Argentine Government during his meetings with the top-brass members...

"... The progress made in the AMIA case could mark the reconstruction of a deteriorated bilateral relationship with the most powerful country in the world."

- "AMIA - the US renews its support for the AMIA bombing probe"

Leading "Clarín" (11/18) reports, "The US has reiterated its support for the Argentine judiciary's decision to issue arrest orders against former Iranian government officials due to their alleged responsibility in the attack against the AMIA. This is what Ambassador Earl Anthony Wayne told FM Jorge Taiana during a meeting at the Foreign Ministry, according to a US Embassy statement.

"According to the communiqué, Wayne welcomed the 'tenacious search for justice against those who are guilty for this terrible attack' against Argentina.

"The meeting, which lasted for fifty minutes, was requested by Ambassador Wayne. Governmental sources confirmed that the US Ambassador conveyed to FM Taiana White House support for the AMIA judicial process just when the country's ties with Iran are at the point of maximum tension. According to the sources, Wayne stressed the Bush administration's satisfaction with the Argentine (Government's) willingness to shed light on the attack."

- "Wayne's high-profile agenda has clear purposes"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" reports (11/ 19) "With surprisingly high profile and remarkable efficiency, thirteen days after his inauguration as US Ambassador, Earl Anthony Wayne has already represented the interests of his country in front of five high-ranking ministers of the Argentine Government and made it clear which are the issues that the USG considers crucial.

"Some of the issues that Wayne tackled during his meetings were investment and bilateral trade, drug trafficking in the region, diplomatic tension with Iran over the AMIA case and the US interest to sell its technology for high-definition digital TV.

"... With unusual sincerity and a straightforward way of saying things that should be imitated by his Argentine interlocutors, Wayne devoted the last 13 days to defending US interests, which have not always been in line with ours."

- "The importance of being included in the US agenda"

Business-financial "InfoBae" reports (11/20) "Last year's SOA was a turning point in the US-Argentine bilateral relationship. However, when indifference seemed to be irreversible, the Republican administration decided to again promote political and economic ties between the two countries. The new US Ambassador to Buenos Aires, Earl Anthony Wayne, had a busy week of meetings with high-ranking government officials, which satisfied the Argentine Government...

Prevailing agreement (between the two sides) during the meetings are an omen of a better bilateral relationship in times ahead. That's good for the country."

- "US concerned about fake IDs just steps away from the Tri-Border"

Newspaper "Perfil" subheads (11/19) "While the US' complaint has not been made formal yet, the Interior Ministry has already taken note and is already planning to replace IDs by an intelligent card." The paper reports (11/19) "The controversial election in Misiones to attempt to reform the provincial Constitution and enable governor Carlos Rovira to be re-elected continues to cause problems for the Kirchner administration.

"The US Embassy in Buenos Aires has now shown its concern and taken note of how easy it is in the province, just a few miles from the Triple Border, to get a fake Identity Card. While the US concern has not reached FM Taiana's office, a high-ranking Interior Ministry government official confirmed this information to 'Perfil.'"

- "Brazil plans to unite South American military forces"

Eleonora Gosman, São Paulo-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (11/19) "... The Brazilian Government is considering the creation of a joint South American military force..."

"The Brazilian Armed Forces are mistrustful due to the increased US military presence in the region.

"... Brazil intends to attain military integration in the region with the goal of defending the region's natural resources."

13. EDITORIALS

- "Consequences of the war of Iraq"

Leading "Clarín" editorializes (11/20), "Another consequence of the war and anarchy gripping Iraq is the annihilation of its leaders, professionals, intellectuals and scientists.

"... By dismantling the structure of Iraqi society, the US unleashed civil war and a proliferation of armed groups and inter-religious and sectarian clashes.

"Iraq does not have the minimum human resources and conditions to face any post-war reconstruction, something that should also be attributed to the lack of planning of the US invasion and occupation of Iraq."

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